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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN, U.S.-INDIA, CLIMATE, BRAZIL-
IRAN, IRAQ, PHILIPPINES, ISRAEL;BERLIN

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1. Lead Stories Summary

Print media led with the upcoming Copenhagen climate summit and a study by climate researchers forecasting an increase in temperatures of up to seven degrees Celsius (FAZ, Sueddeutsche Berliner Zeitung).

Other papers highlighted Chancellor Merkel's speech to the Confederation of German Industry (Tagesspiegel, Die Welt). Editorials focused on business confidence in Germany and on the future of Opel.

ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with reports on student protests in Leipzig.

2. (Afghanistan) Decision Time Approaching

All papers also reported that President Obama will announce his Afghanistan strategy in a speech to the nation on December 1. The papers refer to White House spokesman Robert Gibbs who said the decision-making process has been concluded and added that the President would announce not only the number of additional soldiers he wants to send to Afghanistan but also his future plans for a withdrawal. Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/25) headlined: "'Obama Will Send 34,000 Soldiers for the Time Being," and reported that "U.S.

President Obama plans to announce his future strategy for Afghanistan in an address to the nation on December 1. According to U.S. media reports, rumors are intensifying that Obama will send 34,000 additional soldiers to Afghanistan, and in June of next year [the administration] will review whether the troop surge has had the desired effect in pacifying Afghanistan. Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/25) headlined: "Obama to Present Strategy," while Financial Times Deutschland (11/25) wrote: "Wealthy People Will Pay for Afghanistan - U.S. Senator Wants to Finance Mission with New Income Tax." The daily reported: "The U.S. government has finalized its deliberations on a new strategy for the military mission in Afghanistan. For months, Obama's decision on increasing the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan has been expected with bated breath. Among parliamentarians, provoking questions are circulating on how the increasingly unpopular mission can be financed. The Democratic Chairman of the Armed Forces Committee in the Senate, Carl Levin, brought an additional income tax for top earners into the discussion." Berliner Zeitung (11/25) headlined: "Obama Wants To Complete Afghanistan Job," and wrote that "President Obama will announce his long-expected decision on the new Afghanistan strategy at the beginning of next week."

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13. (U.S.-India) PM Singh in Washington

Many papers carry correspondent reports on Indian Prime Minister Singh's visit to Washington. Sueddeutsche (11/25) headlined: "Pat on the Back for India - During PM Singh's Visit to the U.S. President Obama Wants to Dispel the Suspicion That India is Unimportant for Him." The daily wrote: "According to Indian interpretations, Pakistan and China, the old arch rival and the colossal competitor, enjoy greater support than India in the White House. But Obama has understood. That is why he mobilized all the pomp he could when he received India's PM Singh in the White House. And then Obama paid reverence to India by calling it a 'nuclear power' and 'biggest democracy in the world' and finally by saying that India is 'the leader in Asia and around the world and that India is 'indispensable for the future of the world.' India as a global, even indispensable power - when hearing this, Singh smiled in a satisfied way. At home, too, all the laurels and all the praise with which Obama ensnared the subcontinent may calm down the people."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/25) headlined: "Obama Praises India as a Partner," and reported: "During a solemn reception of India's Prime Minister Singh in the White House, President Obama praised India as an indispensable partner. The president emphasized U.S.-Indian cooperation when it comes to developing new technologies and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Obama said that both nations are striving for a 'future of security and prosperity for all nations.'"

Under the headline: "Transpacific Balance," Berliner Zeitung (11/25) editorialized: "It is no coincidence that President Obama gave the first official state reception of his term for India's PM Singh. This

red carpet treatment followed Obama's important visit to Beijing. The U.S. government is striving for a new relationship with China: integrating instead of containing, this is the slogan. It is true that Washington's rapprochement with Beijing may be unavoidable, but

America's new pussyfooting course towards Beijing is making other Asian players nervous, primarily Japan and India. Geopolitics in Asia should no longer be a zero sum game in which one side wins, while the other side loses. It will be difficult for President Obama to convince his guest of this"

14. (Copenhagen) Climate Summit

Twenty-six climate experts published an appeal to politicians in which they warned against a collapse of the climate. Hans-Joachim Schellnhuber, head of the Potsdam-based Institute for Climate Research, said: "This is the last scientific appeal to the envoys of 192 states not to miss the climate protection train in Copenhagen."

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He added that climate change is happening faster than expected. He said that in order to confine global warming to two degrees, carbon dioxide emissions must peak at the latest in five to ten years and then rapidly decline (all papers).

In a front-page report headlined: "Copenhagen Will Also See U.S. Climate Targets - Will Obama Come?" FAZ (11/25) wrote that the U.S. delegation will present binding goals for a reduction of emissions at the Copenhagen summit. The paper cited U.S. media as saying that President Obama will go public with these goals in the coming days.

In an editorial under the headline: "The Earth Has a Fever," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/25) argued: "It is certainly theoretically possible that climate research could be wrong and that other factors could be responsible for global warming. But those who base their activities on that outlook act like a patient who looks into his bright red pharynx and who is told by his doctor that he suffers from strep throat, but insists that this could be any number of things but not a serious infection - instead of swallowing the right pills."

Berliner Zeitung (11/25) headlined: "U.S. Blockade," and judged: "Will he or will he not come to Copenhagen? The assistance of the U.S. president is urgently necessary. The talks on a global climate protection agreement have got bogged down over the past few weeks."

This also has to do with the United States and this even though President Obama promised a change in the hesitant U.S. climate policy. That is why his participation would be a strong signal. The greatest obstacle on the path to an agreement is the U.S. Senate, which has blocked a national climate protection law for months. But without completed legislation in his pocket, Obama will hardly be able to commit himself."

Die Welt (11/25) opined under the headline: "[Copenhagen] Not Possible Without Horror [Stories]," and noted: "A group of climate researchers told us yesterday that everything would become even worse. It could

be expected that the forecast would become even gloomier shortly before the Copenhagen climate summit. But time will tell whether their forecast will come true. In the meantime, the number of voices from renowned geo-research institutes is on the rise, which, like the IPCC, also think that mankind is responsible for the increase in global warming but who warn against horror scenarios. The credibility of a few climate researchers and their forecasts has now been damaged by the hacker scandal. But by exaggerating their views, they will not get back this credibility."

In a report, headlined; "Obama Speeding Things up," die tageszeitung

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(11/25) reported: "Shortly before the Copenhagen climate summit, President Obama is speeding up things. Before the beginning of the conference in two weeks, his government plans to present targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, irrespective or not of whether the U.S. climate protection bill has been adopted. This is what U.S. papers reported, referring to White House sources."

In an editorial, die tageszeitung (11/25) argued: "All of a sudden, the situation is getting more exciting again because President Obama announced that he would present climate protection targets in Copenhagen. He has hardly reacted to international pressure but, unlike his predecessor, Obama is not ignorant and he is seizing this opportunity to make a considerable profit with a small investment: to stop playing the 'role of a skunk at a garden party.'... [The U.S.] is the most important player in Copenhagen. Obama knows that if the U.S. does not block the deal other industrialized nations will approve it, and if the wealthy nations increase their financial commitments, even threshold countries such as China and India have no more reason to block climate protection any longer. Obama's move comes at the right time."

15. (Brazil-Iran) Lula-Ahmadinejad Meeting

Under the headline: "Lula Recommends himself to the World," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/24) judged: "Following his meetings with Israel's President Peres and Palestinian President Abbas, Brazil's President has now also received Iran's leader Ahmadinejad. This shows how interesting, self-confident and confusing his foreign policy is.

Especially Israel and the United States feel piqued by Ahmadinejad's visit. But even during this visit, the flexible Brazilian leader wanted to prove his pragmatism and independence. He wants to send two messages: First, energy producers Brazil and Iran will improve cooperation, and, second, the rest of the world and the United States in particular should prick their ears: Brazil is back again. The fifth largest nation in the world is rising to an economic power, to an actor who plays in the same league as India and China. Lula incorporates this upswing and also the claim for power. Thus far, Lula has distinguished himself as an important voice in his

immediate

neighborhood...but he has also offered refuge to Honduran President

Zelaya in the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa. But in Honduras, he

finds his limits and these limits are drawn by the United States. Washington allows the putschists to do whatever they want and even allows them to hold absurd elections."

die tageszeitung (11/25) had this to say in an editorial headlined:

"Realpolitician Lula," and observed: "With his decision to invite

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Holocaust denier Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Brazil's President Lula is now

taking a risk. Despite explicit pressure from Washington and the uniform vote of the media in his country he has now received his colleague in Brasilia. And he is right. By doing so, Lula again demonstrates what he considers an independent foreign policy: the right to consider national interests more important than showing considerations for the 'strategic partner' in the United States.

Like

his leftist colleagues in South America, Lula prefers a multipolar global order over a western dominance.... One-sided pressure on Iran

has a counterproductive effect as the domestic development in Iran showed over the past few years. However, with respect to human rights, there are little indications that Lula had a serious talk with

Ahmadinejad. But this is how realpolitik functions on a global scale.

Pragmatist Lula is no exception."

16. (Iraq) Elections

According to an editorial in Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/25) headlined

"Iraq - A House of Cards," "the Tower of Babel was a sound building

compared to the political structures in today's Iraq. They resemble a

house of cards that will collapse if just one card falls. This could

happen since Sunni vice President Tarik al Hashimi again wants to use

his veto against the electoral law. His ethnic group feels

disadvantaged. As long as this conflict has not been settled, there

is no reason to think about a day for the elections. But if the elections are delayed, the withdrawal of U.S. forces will also be delayed since both events are linked together. To a certain extent,

the occupation of the country has resulted in a certain stability, but, on the other hand, the U.S. presence is responsible for tensions

between the ethnic groups. It has always been doubtful whether it will be possible to set up strong pillars in this card house. Once

the Americans are gone, the disintegration of Iraq is a serious possibility even with a new electoral law."

17. (Philippines) Emergency After Killings

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/25) opined: "Politics in the Philippines is

tougher than elsewhere. But the most recent bloodbath in the southern

part of the country has caused a stir even among those who used to shrug their shoulders over similar events. One reason is the large

number of victims. The conflict reveals a basic problem of the country. It is true that democracy formally functions but real power

has always rested in the hands of a few families. If a dispute develops between them, there is no independent state institution

which
can settle it. The powers-that-be are interested in maintaining
this
state of affairs, even if they are in danger of becoming a victim of
this situation. Such problems are solved with what we call 'wild
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west' methods."

18. (Israel/Palestine) Shalit Release

Under the headline: "Gilad Shalit's Release 'Closer Than Ever
Before,'" Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/25) wrote: "Israel's Trade
Minister
Benjamin Ben-Elieser said on the armed forces radio station on
Tuesday
that the release of Gilad Shalit, who has been kidnapped by Hamas,
'is
closer than ever before.' The fate of the man who was kidnapped
three
and a half years ago is moving the Israeli nation as hardly as
anything else. The whole country yearns for his release - but is
also facing an endurance test, because more than 1,000 Palestinian
prisoners, who were sentenced for terrorist activities and for
murder,
are to be set free in return for Shalit's release and now sympathy
is
fighting with fear in Israel."

MURPHY